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Introduction

John Holloway's work spans over four decades of intellectual development and commitment to radical change. Holloway develops his ideas through ongoing dialogues, conversations, debates and discussions with both Marxists and radical scholars and students, and social movements and activists, worldwide. His work developed within the context of the Conference of Socialist Economists (CSE) and was foundational for the establishment of Open Marxism (OM). The chapter focuses on Holloway's theory of interstitial revolution which, paraphrasing Holloway, has produced a 'crack' in Marxist praxis. I start with an account of Holloway's life and intellectual trajectory. Then, I discuss his theory of interstitial revolution, presented in his two books *Change the World Without Taking Power. The meaning of revolution today* (CTWWTP) (2002) and *Crack Capitalism* (CC) (2010). I conclude that for critical theory as a critique of capital, Holloway's work is ground breaking.

Life and Intellectual Trajectory

John Holloway was born on the 26th of July 1947 in Dublin, Ireland. He studied law, did a degree in Higher European Studies at the College of Europe, and received a PhD in Politics from the University of Edinburgh. He taught Politics at the University of Edinburgh until his move to Mexico in 1991. He settled in the Spanish colonial city of Puebla. In Puebla, he established himself as a Professor working in the Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities 'Alfonso Vélez Pliego', at the Benemérita Autonomous University of Puebla, where he presently works (March 2017) teaching post-graduate courses. He is also a member of the Editorial Board of *Bajo el Volcán*, the journal of the Sociology Graduate School of the University.

Holloway began his intellectual relationship with Frankfurt school when he read Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*, in 1967. But it was not until he read the work of Ernst Bloch that he entered the realm of Critical Theory and Marxism. He came across Bloch's philosophy around 1968, when a friend who was a student at the University of Tübingen, where Bloch worked from 1961 until his death in 1977, recommended Bloch's work to him. Holloway read Bloch's work before Karl Marx's *Capital*. He studied Adorno's theory in the 1970s and continued working

with it, encouraged by Richard Gunn and Werner Bonefeld in the late 1980s and early 1990; and through joint work with his colleagues at the Benemérita Autonomous University of Puebla in the 1990s and 2000s.

In 1974, Holloway joined the CSE, which was created as a non-sectarian and internationalist forum for theoretical Marxist political debate in the UK, as a response to the need to develop a socialist critique of Marxist orthodoxy. The Thatcher's years brought about intense debates on globalization and the internationalization of the nation-state among the various groupings of the British Left. The CSE aimed to understand the relation between domestic policy and international developments and the character of the capitalist state within the context of a globalising world economy and empower the Marxist critique of capital.[1]

Within the context of the CSE state debate, Holloway developed the category of state as political form of definite social relations in distinction to those approaches that tended to regard it as a political *institution* and argued that 'the internationalization of capital had undermined the ability for the state to serve the interests of 'national capital' (Clarke 1991b: 22). Holloway agreed with other CSE members (Hugo Radice, Sol Picciotto and Simon Clarke) about the importance of raising 'the question of the relation between class struggle and the restructuring of capital' (Clarke 1991b: 23) and the need to reintroduce class struggle as intrinsic – rather than external - to the analysis of the state. The CSE State Study Group was influenced by the German Derivation debate (GD), whose members, i.e. Joachim Hirsch and Heide Gerstenberger, conceived of the state as the political *form* of the capitalist social relations, and sought to develop a materialist critique of the state. The GD debate applied the concept of 'form' to their exploration of the state, conceiving of the latter as logically and historically derived from capital. The GD debate interpreted Marx's *Capital* as a *materialist critique of the capitalist economy,* wherein the political and the economic were not separated spheres but rather distinct moments of capital as a social totality. Whilst this development was vital for the CSE State Debate, they rejected the GD's problematic assertion of a 'logical derivation' of the state from capital. As Holloway highlights, 'there is a tendency to see logic as establishing the general framework of development, with the actual details being filled in by the history of class struggle, so that in the end class struggle is seen as being subordinated to the structural logic of capitalism' (Holloway 1993a: 78).[2]

By rejecting the idea of 'logical' derivation and arguing for the existence of the state as a historical necessity of class struggle (Clarke 1991a), the CSE State Study group succeeded in the task of re-integrating class struggle into the analysis of the political and the economic forms of the capitalist social relations.[3] In 1977, John Holloway co-authored an article with Sol Picciotto where they contested Ralph Miliband's and Nicos Poulantzas' analysis of the state, arguing that their 'approach rests…on a misunderstanding of Marx's great work, which is not an analysis of the "economic level" but a materialist critique of political economy, i.e. precisely a materialist critique of bourgeois attempts to analyse the economy in isolation from the class relations of exploitation on which it is based' (Holloway and Picciotto 1977: 82). According to Holloway and Picciotto, in order to understand the crisis of capitalism and the role of the state within it, it was essential to abandon the idea of crisis as 'economic crisis' and to interpret crisis as the crisis of the capital relation. The materialist theory of the state does not start from the analysis of the state, but

from the analysis of capital as a definite form of social relations. A 'political' theory of the state (such as Miliband's or Poulantzas'), autonomizes the state as an object of study, which leads to the *methodological* detachment of the study of the state form from the capitalist social relations. As suggested by Hirsch, the separation between the political and the economic prevents understanding of the state as the political form of capitalist society.
The theoretical developments of the CSE State Study Group constituted a turning point in the Marxist state debate.[4] To Holloway, 'to understand the political and the economic as two forms, as two moments, of the relation between capital and labour implies to understand the state as a process that fetishizes social relations' (Holloway in Thwaites Rey and Dinerstein 1994: 14, author's interview).[5] The question was not what is the state but what is capital and why the state appears as autonomized from capitalist society. Holloway and Picciotto discussed the specific form of domination in capitalist society by using Pashukanis' question:

> 'Why does the dominance of a class not continue to be that which it is - that is to say, the subordination in fact of one part of the population to another part? Why does it take on the form of official state domination? …Why is it disassociated from the dominant class - taking the form of an impersonal mechanism of public authority isolated from society?' (Pashukanis, cited in Holloway and Picciotto 1977: 79).

Their analysis pointed to the distinctive character of the state in capitalist society: while it *appears* above society as a *deux machina*, i.e. as an autonomous institution above society, it is but the political form of capital. For Holloway and Picciotto (1977: 79) 'the important distinguishing feature of class domination in capitalist society is that it is mediated through commodity exchange'. In practical terms this means that 'the state has to be derived from the analysis of class struggles surrounding the reproduction of capital instead of being derived in some way from the surface forms of appearance of capital.' (Clarke 1991c: 185)

Yet, it was still not clear how the state was experienced in everyday life. In 1979, Holloway was a member of the CSE London –Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, and they published a pamphlet entitled *In and against the state*.[6] It criticized 'the dominant, "Fabian" ideology of the Labour Party' in which

> 'the expansion of the welfare state is identified with the onward march towards socialism. Often people make a distinction between two different sides of the state. They think of the state as having a "good" (i.e. socialist) side, which would include social services, health, education and nationalised industries; and a "bad" (i.e. capitalist) side, involving such functions as defence, law and order, and aid to private industry. In this view the struggle for socialism involves trying to expand the good side and restrict the bad side' (LERWG 1980: 56).

In their argument problem with reformism was its lack of recognition of the capitalist character of the state. The state is not a state *in* a capitalist society but a *capitalist state*: 'How is the state a capitalist state?' The LERWG maintained that 'what makes the state a capitalist state is the way in which it is built into the whole structure of

capitalist social relations' (LERWG 1980: 56). They offered the notion of 'in and against the state' to express the contradictory form of both the state and the experience of the state, as both a form of social relations and an institution: 'The two senses are closely intertwined, but the distinction is important. The problem of working in and against the state is precisely the problem of turning our routine contact with the state apparatus against the form of social relations which the apparatus is trying to impose upon our actions' (59).

But if the state was conceived of as the political form of capital, what was the relation between the nation state and global capital and how did the state form change as a result of major transformations in the form of capital accumulation? According to Holloway the state is not the starting point for the analysis of the state. If we do so, the world 'appears as the sum of nation-states' (Holloway 1996b: 117). He argued that 'to reach a satisfactory understanding of the changes taking place […] we need to go beyond the category of "the state", or rather we need to go beyond the assumption of the separateness of the different states to find a way of discussing their unity' (118).

Holloway makes an important distinction between 'the political' and 'the state'. The political is a 'moment of the totality of capitalist social relations' (Holloway 1996b: 123) which exists not as a global state, but as a 'multiplicity of apparently autonomous territorially distinct national state' (124). Nation states are political 'forms of the global totality of social relations' (122). The relation between both –the political and the nation states-is such that the political is

> 'fractured into territorially defined units: this fracturing is fundamental to an understanding of the political…The world is not an aggregation of national states, national capitalisms or national societies: rather the fractured existence of the political as national states decomposes the world into so many apparently autonomous units' (Holloway 1996b: 124).

The CSE state study group members had already reached the conclusion that the problem was not that the nation state was being weakened by global capital, illustrated by the impossibility of maintaining the Keynesian state due to increasing pressures from global capital but that the state was the political form of the social relations of capital as fundamentally a world market relationship. With the transformation of capital into money (financialisation), national states where now competing for a portion of global capital to sustain domestic social reproduction. The neoliberal form of the state was not 'economic' or 'political' but induced material changes produced by the global transformation of capital that were brought about by the class struggle. The crisis of Keynesianism and the emergence of monetarism could thus not be explained by recourse to either political or economic rationality. Rather, they manifested a crisis-ridden process of restructuring of the capitalist social relations at the level of the world market level (Clarke 1988: 11),

Holloway's contribution to this specific debate focused on 'labour' as the central category of the capitalist crisis. In this argument, the crisis of Keynesianism amounted to a crisis of the specifically Keynesian form of the

recognition of the power of labour. Keynesianism expressed the power of labour as 'mode of domination' (Holloway 1996a: 8). That is, the Keynesian state contained the power of labour via the 'monetization' of class conflict: 'In the face of rigidity and revolt, money was the great lubricant. Wage-bargaining became the focus of both managerial change and worker discontent' (23). He thus analysed the crisis of Keynesianism as a crisis of the containment of labour (27).

In Holloway's approach, the notion of *form* developed from an earlier account of the state as the political form of capitalist society into an argument about fetishism as an open process of fetishization (Holloway 1992). This change marks a second moment in Holloway's trajectory as a key contributor to Open Marxism (OM). The term was employed by Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn and the late Kosmas Psychopedis in the early 1990s to challenge the 'closed', 'scientistic and positivistic' Marxist tradition. Open Marxism was inspired by the tradition of unorthodox Marxists and critical radical thinkers such as Adorno, Agnoli, Bloch, Lukács, Luxemburg, Rubin, Pashukanis, and Marx (Holloway 1993a: 77). The term open Marxism goes back to the title of a book in which Ernst Mandel and Johannes Agnoli (1980) 'debated the meaning of Marx's critique' and, connected with it, whether Marxists economics is a contradiction in terms. While Mandel argued that it is not, the Open Marxists followed Agnoli who contended that it was because 'Marx primarily negated the world of capital by revealing its human social content' (Bonefeld in Bieler *et al* 2006: 178). Open Marxism rejects the dogmatic closure of the categories of thought: 'open Marxism offers to conceptualize the contradictions internal to domination itself…critique is open inasmuch as it involves a reciprocal interrelation between the categories of theory (which interrogates practice) and of practice (which constitutes the framework for critique)' (Bonefeld et al 1992a: xi). Holloway described open Marxism as the 'freeing Marx' from traditional theory (Holloway 1993b). In his account, it entailed a theory of struggle: 'to speak of struggle is to speak of the openness of social development; to think of Marxism as a theory of struggle is to think of Marxist categories as open categories, categories which conceptualise the openness of society' (Holloway 1993a: 76).

One of the issues at stake in the abovementioned debate between Mandel and Agnoliwas that '[t]he critique of social forms…amounts to a critique of economic categories on a human basis and it does so by returning the constituted forms of the economic categories to "relations between humans" (Marx 1972: 147)' (Bonefeld in Bieler *et al* 2006: 178). For Holloway's theoretical development this critique of social form is crucial. He developed it by dissecting the category labour and its 'relation with capital', which led him to the argument that capital and labour form an *inner connection*.[7] In Holloway's contribution the argument about inner connection established Marx's *critique of* political economy as a critical theory of labour as constitutive power. As a he put it, 'it is labour alone which constitutes social reality... our own power is confronted by nothing but our own power, albeit in alienated form' (Holloway 1993: 19). As a consequence, the resolution to Marx's theory of struggle cannot lie in the 'reversal of the polarity between capital and labour, but in its dissolution' (Holloway 1995: 164). That is, labour appears in capital as its alienated form of existence (Dinerstein and Neary 2002b). As Gunn (1987) highlights, '[s]ocial roles are

mediations of class struggle, i.e. they are modes of existence of class struggle: as mediated in terms of roles, class struggle exists in the mode of being denied' (20).[8]

The notion of 'form' points to the historical condition of *transitoriness* of the ways in which labour exists in and against capital. The forms of existence of labour are not 'constitute*d*' by some abstract social forces (Bonefeld 1995: 183). Rather, they are be*ing* constituted through class struggle. Hence, 'to introduce the concept of form is to move from the photographic print to its negative ... [the] various implications of forms (historicity, negativity, internality) are well captured by the term 'mode of existence' (Holloway 1995: 165). Form is 'central to Marx's discussion in *Capital*' (164) and facilitates the understanding of the inner connections (and mediations) of class struggle. Form implies a concept of totality. But a totality that is not impenetrable as Marxist traditional theory suggest: 'the fetishised forms in which capitalist relations appear are not a totally opaque cover completely concealing class exploitation from those who are subjected to it…Money, capital, interest, rent, profit, state –all are commonly experiences as aspects of a general system of oppression, even though their precise interconnections may not be understood' (Holloway 1992b: 157).The problem at stake was how to theorize labour resistance and subjectivity against this totality. Holloway offered a critique of the concept of work understood as resistance, as practical subjectivity and negativity, and replaced the notion of fetishism with fetishisation. Both will be central to his theory of revolution. Work 'is subjectivity –practical subjectivity, since there is no other; and work is negativity, since it involves the practical negation of that which exists. Work is all-constitutive. "Objectivity" is nothing but objectified subjectivity' (172). Subjectivity exists then in a contradictory form based on the existence of work 'in the form of the two-fold nature of labour': as concrete labour and as abstract labour. As we will see below, this distinction is key to Holloway's re-conceptualisation of class struggle. Although Marxists acknowledge the twofold character of labour, they have neglected the fact that 'the subordination of concrete to abstract labour (the production of value) and the resistance to it are central to class struggle. Work, he contends, 'exists in a form which negates that "free conscious activity" which is the "species characteristic of man". Marx's central criticism of capitalism is that it dehumanises people by depriving them of that which makes them human' (172).

The focus on the dehumanizing effect of work in capitalism marks a third 'moment' in Holloway's intellectual trajectory, which coincided with the Zapatistas' uprising in 1994. The uprising inspired a worldwide discussion of class struggle as a struggle for dignity, which cannot be attained in capitalist society. Holloway found in Zapatismo the inspiration to produce a theoretical revolution. The indigenous revolt challenged existing revolutionary traditions as the movement put 'human dignity' instead of class at the centre of their revolution. Following indigenous traditions of self-determination and self-government, they were not interested in taking power. The Zapatistas rebelled against traditional ways of conceiving of radical change and problematised the traditional concept of class. Holloway became interested in the way the Zapatistas' challenge the binary thinking of class analysis with their notion of 'we' or 'revolutionary we' (*nosotros revolucionario*) and anti-power. The Zapatistas' discourse mediated by Subcommander Insurgent Marcos' speeches, poems and prose, and the movement's Declarations of the Lacandon Jungle resonated with Holloway's critique of Leninism, 'Real Socialism' and Scientific Marxism. More

importantly Holloway connected with the movements' rejection of the state as the main locus for revolutionary change. Holloway became one of the intellectual reference points for the Zapatistas' message and resistance beyond Chiapas. During this time, and in addition to his short articles about Zapatismo in *Common Sense*, he co-edited a book (with Eloína Peláez) featuring several dimensions of the Zapatistas' uprising and movement, including his own reflections on the movement's notion of power, the meaning of revolution and their concept of dignity (Holloway and Peláez 1998).

Holloway's book CTWWTP, published in 2002, can be regarded as the culmination of his theoretical efforts to gain understanding of a world in flux. According to Holloway, 'the aim of the book is to promote discussion, a discussion that moves forward, that recognises that we all desperately want to change the world but that none of us know how to do it' (Holloway 2005b: 284). Holloway characterised his book as Janus-faced: 'an attempt to say to activists that, in order to take their activism seriously, they must read Marx and theorise austerely; and to say to austere Marxist theorists that they must break through their austerity and think politically, and thereby transform their own theory' (283-84).

The years that followed the Zapatistas' revolt were politically stimulating. In 1999, a two-day street protest outside the State Convention and Trade Center in Seattle, US, that prevented the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference from taking place, appeared as a turning point in social activism.[9] Both the Battle of Seattle and the Zapatistas' revolt led to the birth of the Global Justice Movement (GJM), an umbrella movement that comprised new forms of social activism and citizens' mobilisation that were not led by the labour movement, did not aim at taking part or take the power of the state, and left behind the traditional leftist discourse based on class, to advocate dignity, instead.

The emergence of transnational activism as well as the intensification of local resistance to neoliberal globalization put Holloway in the spotlight of passionate debates and discussions among academics as well as activists about the meaning of collective actions, social movements, of politics and anti-politics and relationship of anti-capitalism to the state and money. While the book's argument resonated among those who celebrated autonomy as a tool for radical change, Holloway's proposition produced intellectual adversaries too, i.e. those who hold onto traditional readings of Marx and Marxist politics and will not forgive his irreverence towards the working class as the subject of revolution and, above all, his contempt for the state (see Callinicos 2005, Bensaïd 2005). His experience of the two years after the publication of the book was like 'playing at the edge of the sea and being hit by big waves of enthusiasm and criticism which roll me over and over: an exhilarating and sometimes confusing experience in which I occasionally lose the thread of the argument' (Holloway 2005: 39). Holloway continued working in the Institute for Social Sciences at the Autonomous University of Puebla. He co-edited a book on the significance of Adorno's negative dialectics for understanding resistance and political activism today, with Sergio Tischler and Fernando Matamoros. The publication was an outcome of the ongoing seminar in 'Subjectivity and Critical theory' delivered for the Sociology Postgraduate Programme by the three book editors.

Despite the subtitle *The meaning of revolution today*, CTWWTP does not offer a theory of revolution. It took six more years for such theory to emerge amidst the context marked by the capitalist financial crisis of 2008 and expansion politics of austerity in the North. CC (2010) offers a more sophisticated discussion of crisis, labour, resistance and revolution and it is here, in his second book where Holloway offers the idea of 'crack' as a way of thinking revolutionary struggles. He asserts that *revolution cannot be other than interstitial* (Holloway 2010). Since then, John Holloway has continued tirelessly to give keynotes, lectures, and participating in workshops, events and conferences worldwide and to write short interventions and articles on the crisis of abstract labour, the reading of Marx's capital, communization, hope and the Greek crisis, in English and in translation.

A Theory of Interstitial Revolution

Marxism as a theory of struggle

Holloway's proposal that Marxism is a *theory of struggle* originated in a short 'Note on Fordism and neo-Fordism' where he claimed 'If Marxism is not about the "beat of the heart", it is nothing. If it is not "pushing against the wall", it has no meaning' (Holloway, 1987: 59).[10] In CTWWTP Holloway dedicates an entire chapter to critiquing the tradition of Scientific Marxism, a Marxism that sees itself as a 'theory of' for example, capitalist oppression, but not of the contradictions of that oppression (see Gunn 1994; Holloway 1994: 40). Echoing Horkheimer's critique of traditional theory as opposed to critical social theory, Holloway argues that Marxism cannot be 'Scientific Marxism' i.e. the positivisation of theory or a paradigm: 'In so far as Marxism emphasises the regularities of social development, and the interconnections between phenomena as part of a social totality, it lends itself very easily to a view of capitalism as a relatively smoothly self-reproducing society…Marxism, from being a theory of the destruction of capitalist society, becomes a theory of its reproduction' (Holloway 2002: 136). [11]

Holloway's Marxism as a theory of struggle is decisively Blochian. Ernst Bloch argued that 'Marxism in general is absolutely nothing but the struggle against the dehumanization which culminates in capitalism until it is completely cancelled' (Bloch, 1959/1986: 1358). To Bloch, Marx's humanitarianism is not as an abstract concept. Rather, it invokes struggle to create another form of human society. Holloway's Marxism is similar to Bloch's Marxism also in another way. Like Bloch's, Holloway's Marxism is prefigurative, for both see Marxism as a theorisation that opens a space to the not yet. Bloch's philosophy appeals to those who aim to escape the caricatures of a ready-made Marxist utopia and wish -like Holloway- to rephrase resistance, antagonism and revolution today.

Fetishization, Form and Totality

As a theory of struggle, Marxism rejects the traditional Marxist's understanding of 'totality'. To Holloway, the distinction between fetishism and fetishization and the replacement of the former with the later 'is crucial for a discussion of Marxist theory' (Holloway 2002c: 27). To re-incorporate class struggle into the discussion of commodity fetishism, 'fetishism' must be seen 'as a process of de-fetishisation/re-fetishization' so that we can

emphasise the 'inherent fragility of capitalist social relations' (Holloway 1992b: 157). The main difference, maintains Holloway, is that, while fetishism sees the world as domination, fetishization sees it in terms of struggle. This distinction between fetishism and fetishization is a 'central thread' of CTWWTP: 'that the struggle against capital is a struggle against fetishism and that fetishism must be understood as a process of fetishization' (Holloway 2005a). The notion of fetishisation is rooted in the above mentioned work of the CSE State Study Group and their capital relation theory of the state, which conceives of the state 'as a form of the capital relation, an aspect of the fetishisation of social relations under capitalism' (Holloway 2005a): 'For me, the most important turning point in this discussion was the argument that fetishism has to be understood not as *fait accompli* but as process, as form-process or process of formation, as struggle' (Holloway 2005a).[12]

Fetishization entails a totality that is open. For Holloway, totality refers to inner connections among fragmented forms of social relations rather than to an entirety. The notion of *form* is most crucial in this regard. To Holloway, 'the concept of "form" implies a concept of "totality" (Holloway 1995: 166). To use the notion of form means to look at society 'from the point of view of its overcoming' (Holloway 1992: 154). Holloway sees in the concept of fetishism the possibility to 'emphasize the inherent fragility of capitalist social relations. Defetishization/refetishization is a constant struggle' (157). In CTWWTP, Holloway engages critically with Lukács' notion of reification developed in *History and Class Consciousness* (1923). To Lukács, reification affects the totality of social relations and not only the labour process; or in other words, as Holloway cites: 'the fate of the worker becomes the fate of society as a whole' (Luckács 1971: 91, cited in Holloway 2002a: 56). In the perverted world, we live in 'relations between people exist in the form of relations between things. Social relations are "thingified" or "reified" (Holloway 2002a: 56). Luckács, argues Holloway, 'points to the contradictory nature of reification for it entails a split between subjectivity and objectivity. Such a split operates within the psychology of the worker as a potential rupture with her chains, as a result of the swinging experience between fetishizing – defetishising' (82). However, although this seems to point in the direction of a theory of revolution, writes Holloway, Luckács final move is toward external intervention. The tensions are not resolved with and by the proletariat but by the party: 'Despite the radical character of his essays, Luckács is operating in a theoretical and political context which is already pre-constituted. His approach is far from the crude 'scientific Marxism' of the Engelsian-Leninist tradition, yet his theoretical-political world is the same' (84).

Holloway also problematises Adorno's (and the Frankfurt School's) idea of totality. According to him, it is disengaged from the idea of revolution and could not associate reification or fetishism with anti-fetishism (Holloway 2002a: 87). Despite differences, Holloway suggests that all Frankfurt School scholars emphasize 'the all-pervasive character of fetishism in modern capitalism [which] leads to the conclusion that the only possible source of anti-fetishism lies outside the ordinary – whether it be the Party (Luckács), the privileged intellectuals (Horkheimer and Adorno) or the "substratum of the outcasts and the outsiders" (Marcuse)' (Holloway 2002a: 88). Holloway rejects this elitist understanding of theory and points out its profound political implications: 'the view either that revolution is impossible or that it must be led by an emancipated vanguard acting *on behalf of* the working class: this leads to a

focus on the state, which is precisely a form of organization *on behalf of*, that is, a form of exclusion and repression' (Holloway 2005a: 39). Instead, fetishisation starts 'from a self-divided subject … against its/our own alienation or fetishisation, driving towards social self-determination…there is no possible saviour, no possible emancipated vanguard' (39). *Totality* is an open process full of tensions as the struggle of what exists in the mode of being denied moves in and against the reified forms of capitalist social relations: 'the struggle for the dissolution of power is the struggle for the emancipation of power to (*potentia*) from power-over (*potestas*)' (Holloway 2002d).

Class*ification, *Class struggle and the Revolutionary Subject

Holloway's theory of revolution deconstructs the categories of class and class struggle and rethinks the revolutionary subject. As Richard Gunn argues 'it is not that classes, as socially (or structurally) pre-given entities, enter into struggle. Rather - holding fast to the conception of class relations as relations of struggle - we should think of class struggle as the fundamental premise of class' (Gunn 1987: 16). [13] Holloway rejects *class* as a sociological descriptor or as a pre-constituted entity. Instead of class he talks about 'classification' (2002c). That is, a process through which we are transformed into something else, that is *classified* as the working class.[14] If class is understood as a fixed entity, it inevitably leads to identitarian thinking. But to Holloway identitarian thinking does not comprehend society, nor class. Instead, it classifies what it perceives and, in so doing, fragments human activity as a whole in thought. Revolutionary praxis is necessarily anti-identitarian. Rather than denying the importance of workers' struggles (as many critics have charged him with), Holloway rejects the 'working class' as the subject of revolution. For him, the radical subject is 'we'. We are the working class; and yet we *are not* the working class. We live in contradiction: 'We struggle as the working class *and* against being the working class: 'We are/ are not working class ... We classify ourselves in so far as we produce capital, in so far as we respect money, in so far as we participate, through our practice, our theory, our language (our defining the working class), in the separation of subject and object' (36-37).

The main issue with a theory of revolution based on the power of the working class is that the working class is a subjectivity that is 'defined on the basis of its subordination to capital: it is because it is subordinated to capital (as wage workers…) that it is *defined* as working class…by being defined the working class is *identified* as a particular group of people.' (Holloway 2002: 140-141, italics in the original). The definition and classification of the working class 'on the basis of its subordination to capital' (140) poses the wrong question of belonging, i.e. who belongs and who does not belong to the working class. This question obscures the complex problem of social antagonism for it limits the struggle to a specific identity. The struggles of today cannot be typify the struggle of the 'working class' or any other 'subject' for the reason that 'the subject of anti-capitalist struggle is ... an anti-identitarian subject' (Holloway 2009b: 98).

Holloway points to the two-fold character of labour in capitalism as concrete and abstract, and argues that traditional readings of Marx have historically neglected the antagonism between useful doing and abstract labour. He moves the axis of class antagonism from labour against capital to doing against labour. He argues that the key to

understanding struggles is to see them not as the struggle between labour and capital (the orthodox Marxist view), but as *'*the struggle of *doing against labour (and therefore against capital)*' (Holloway 2010: 157). By exposing the twofold character of labour, Holloway points to the fethishization of human activity (named 'doing') as abstract labour. This process of fetishization produces a constant 'rupture of the social flow of doing' (115). Abstract labour, he argues, amounts to the 'weaving of capitalism' (87), i.e. the abstraction of human activity constitutes the form through which capitalism weaves its web of social cohesion. He translates his reading of the critique of political economy into a new language where labour becomes 'doing' against abstract labour, i.e. where class antagonism asserts itself in the form of a struggle against classification, that is, he conceives of doing as refusal of abstract labour. The labour movement, a movement that represents and defends wage labour, can therefore not be revolutionary (Holloway 2010a). He thus conceives of doing as a crisis of abstract labour, which, Holloway (2010b: 917) claims, is evident in the decline of the trade union movement, the crisis of social democracy, and the collapse of real Socialism, etc.

Doing, practical negativity and anti-power

The historical difficulty for the struggles of the other labour movement is how to construct a critique beyond the idea of work, when capitalist work is still the defining principle of the organisation of social life (Dinerstein and Neary 2002b: 15). Holloway writes that 'an important question that arises is whether the most important anti-capitalist theory, Marxism, is relevant for understanding these movements' (Holloway 2010b: 912).

Holloway replaces the term work with the above-mentioned notion of 'doing':

> 'there are two different sorts of activity: one that is externally imposed and experienced as either directly unpleasant or part of a system that we reject, and another that pushes towards self-determination. We really need two different words for these two different types of activity. We shall follow the suggestion of Engels in a footnote in *Capital* (Marx 1965 [1867]: 47) by referring to the former activity as *labour* and the latter simply as *doing*' (Holloway 2010b: 910-911).

Doing is not just work. 'Doing' is the movement of 'practical negativity': 'Doing changes, negates an existing state of affairs. Doing goes beyond, transcends' (Holloway 2002a: 23). Doing exists in a 'mode of being denied' (Gunn 1987) because it is constantly transformed into abstract labour (value, money).[15] Thus, the doers are *denied their doi*ng (Dinerstein 2012: 525). 'The doing of the doers is deprived of social validation: we and our doing become invisible' (Holloway 2002: 29-30).

The argument that class struggle is a struggle of *doing against abstract labour* points to the existence of two types of antagonisms which, according to Holloway, emanate from the dual character of labour in capitalism: the antagonism of exploitation and the antagonism of abstraction. While the antagonism of exploitation is the struggle *of* labour in the work place, the antagonism of abstraction is a struggle *against* labour, that is

> 'the struggle against the constitution of labour as an activity distinct from the general flow of doing … [this is] the struggle of what is sometimes referred to as the other labour movement, but it is in no sense limited to the workplace…these are at a 'deeper level of anti-capitalist struggle, the struggle against the labour that produces capital' (Holloway 2010b: 915).

The idea of class struggle is a struggle of doing against abstract labour is consistent with Holloway's rejection of two antagonistic subjects of struggle for ultimately it is labour alone which confronts its own existence as capital (Dinerstein and Neary 2002b); and follows on from the CSE's conclusion reached in the 1980 that emphasises the subordination of human practice to the power of money:

> 'Marx value did not correspond to Ricardo's embodied labour, but to abstract labour that appeared in the form of money…the distinctiveness of Marx's theory lay not so much in the idea of labour as the source of value and surplus value as in the idea of money as the most abstract form of capitalist property and so as the supreme social power through which social reproduction is subordinated to the power of capital' (Clarke 1988: 13-14).

For Holloway doing is the struggle *against* the transformation of all human practice into an abstract measure of labour time. In this manner, he emphasises subjectivity as negativity. This conception of doing is a fundamental tenet of his theory of interstitial revolution. For Adorno, dialectic means impossibility of closure. The negation of the negation cannot be resolved positively. If this would be the case, 'the negation of the negation would be another identity, a new delusion, a projection of consequential logic – and ultimately of the principle of subjectivity-upon the absolute' (Adorno 1995: 160). Holloway holds on to this conception of the negative and develops it to its most radical conclusion.

In distinction to Adorno, and paraphrasing Luckács, Holloway is an uncomfortable guest at the Grand Hotel Abyss. His appreciation of Adorno's negative dialectics is combined with Bloch's argument about the necessity of concrete utopia and the utopian function of hope. The 'fusion between negativity and hope' offered by Holloway is founded on the *not yet* in Bloch (Dinerstein 2012). Still, Adorno's rejection of activism does not exclude hope as a category of negative critique. As Amsler reminds us, Adorno defends 'hope as a critical practice' (2016: 20): 'In the end hope, wrested from reality by negating it, is the only form in which truth appears. Without hope, the idea of truth would be scarcely even thinkable, and it is the cardinal untruth, having recognized existence to be bad, to present it as truth simply because it has been recognized' (Adorno 2005: 98). Utopia is 'the ray of light that reveals the whole to be untrue in all its moments… the utopia of the whole truth, which is still to be realized' (Adorno cited by Boldyrev 2014: 173). Thus, negativity contains the *possibility* of *affirmation* of another praxis, a praxis that was denied and which, by being enacted, denies the impossibility of the existence of an alternative (Dinerstein 2016b). In this manner Holloway writes: 'the struggle of that which exists in the form of being denied is inevitably both

negative and positive, both scream and doing; negative because its affirmation can take place only against its own denial, and positive because it is the assertion of that which exists, albeit in the form of being denied' (Holloway 2002: 213).

Hope constitutes a call for negativity to understand reality as full of improbable possibilities: 'humans are subjects while animals are not. Subjectivity refers to the conscious projection beyond that which exists, the ability to negate that which exists and create something that does not yet exist' (Holloway 2002: 25-26). Therefore, '[r]evolutionary politics (or better anti-politics) is the explicit affirmation in all its infinite richness of that which is denied. "Dignity" is the word that the Zapatistas use to talk of this affirmation' (212).

Power, Anti-power and the State

One of the most striking thesis in Holloway's theory of revolution is that the 'revolution is about destroying relations of power. The goal is to create a society based on the mutual recognition of people's dignity' (Holloway 2002a: 20). As we have seen in section II, Holloway conceived of the state as a political form of capitalist social relations, arguing that the state is not a thing but a process of class struggle. For this reason, 'it is crucial to understand the class character of the state as a form of social relations and to develop our own distinctive, a-symmetrical forms, forms which move against-and-beyond the fetishisation characteristic of capitalist forms' (Holloway 2005: XX).

The problem is not the state but how we understand power in relation to the state. Power is 'usually associated with the control of money or the state'. The Left, mainstream, Leninist, or social democratic, have all focus on the state as the main locus of social change (Holloway 1996: 21). But this strategy has failed. It not only failed in achieving its goals but also 'has tended to destroy the movements pushing for radical change'. Holloway thus suggests that the revolutionary experiments of the twentieth century 'did not aim too high, but aimed too low' (Holloway 2002a: 20). That is, they did not aim to dissolve relations of power. What is therefore necessary is a 'revolutionary challenge' that changes 'the world without taking power' (20).

With the Zapatistas Holloway dared to address explicitly the insignificant role of the state for revolutionary change: instead of endorsing 'the paradigm that has dominated left-wing thought for at least a century', i.e. 'the state illusion [which] puts the state at the centre of the concept of radical change (Holloway 2002b), the Zapatistas' rejection of the state power must be viewed as a principle of struggle for self-determination. To the Zapatistas people have dignity already, such dignity exists as the negation of power, the negation of degradation (25). The Zapatistas' notion of civil society is not the dominant notion of civil society, defined as a sphere established apart from, regulated via or complementary to the state. Through the struggle for self-determination, the Zapatistas' notion of civil society must not be interpreted as an 'actualization of the classic term', because, following Esteva, it 'alludes to a mutation in the political body' in which civil society would not counterweight [or substitute] the power of the state but 'makes it superfluous'. The Zapatistas activated the power they already have (Esteva 1999: 159). Esteva's point

is central to Holloway's conclusion of negativity: 'We struggle in and against and beyond…[fetishized] forms' (Holloway 2005).

Crack Capitalism: Revolution as an interstitial process

In CC, Holloway rephrases the traditional revolutionary question to how 'to stop making capitalism' (Holloway 2010: 255)**.** Revolution, argues Holloway, starts with the 'scream'[16] here and now, and constitutes an ongoing (present) process of refusal to power and construction of anti-power through 'practical negativity'. Practical negativity means a multiplicity of acts of rejection of the capitalist world and the struggle against the transformation of human capacity into abstract labour, i.e. money. To stop making capitalism is to crack it, which, rather than attempting to achieve the total transformation of society by means of taking the power of the state, aims at an ongoing opening of the world.

Conceived as cracks, resistance breaks the 'social synthesis of capitalist society':

> 'Any society is based on some sort of social cohesion, some form of relation between the activities of the many different people. In capitalist society, this cohesion has a particular logic often described in terms of the laws f capitalist development. There is a systemic closure that gives the social cohesion a particular force and makes it very difficult to break. To underline the close-knit character of social cohesion in capitalist society, I refer to it as a *social synthesis'* (Holloway 2010: 52)

Cracks are 'fissures' that offer 'thousand answers to the question of revolution.' (Holloway 2003: 4). Thus, '[t]he only way to think of changing the world radically is as a multiplicity of interstitial movements running from the particular' (11). The cracks clash with the logic of the state, they disrupt the homogenization of time, they confront the fetishism of commodities and money. The impact of the crack must not be measured in terms of a future gain but in the 'here and now'. Cracks always interrupt the process of abstraction, of doing into labour, that forms the capitalist 'social synthesis'.

The subject of the interstitial revolution is not 'the working class'. Rather, it is an undefined subject comprised by doers, i.e. 'we'. There is no particular organization to lead the process.[17] Our doings are united by the common experience of a variety of forms of oppression that force our 'doing' to exist as abstract labour (money). Cracks are inevitably 'vulnerable to the gelatinous suction of the capitalist synthesis' (Holloway 2010: 51). They are always at risk of helping the capitalist state to reframe its policies along the lines of market-oriented liberalism. Thus, cracks exist 'on the edge of impossibility' (71). But this is not a zero sum. Total subordination is impossible: 'concrete doing is not, and cannot be, totally subordinated to abstract labour. There is a non-identity between them, an asymmetry: doing does not fit in to abstract labour without a remainder. Cracks point to the emergence of another type activity: *doing*. Hence, there is always a surplus, an overflowing. There is always a pushing in different

directions' (173). Asymmetry is the hidden premise of the capitalist social relations.

Conclusion: There is a before and after

John Holloway has turned the page to both a new Marxism and a new thinking about revolution. Both have their roots in a long-term process of theoretical development where Holloway found his own voice by collaborating with fellow critical theorists within the CSE, OM and the University of Puebla. He contributed to the process of demystifying the state, the freeing Marx and the revitalization of Marxism as a theory of struggle. Holloway committed himself to the task of communicating and interpreting Marxism in a way that becomes closer to everyday struggles. Like the first generation of Frankfurt scholars, Holloway criticizes the separation between theory and practice and calls for the creation of a 'we' that unifies both. By so doing, he has achieved something that Richard Gunn suggested some time ago: 'what is needful to show is that Marxism requires an appeal to common sense; that it can make this appeal; and that it can achieve its synthesis of theory and practice once this appeal is made' (Gunn 1991: 88; 1987). Holloway's rejection of capital as a form of society is uncompromising. Yet, he points to the openness of reality. Capital is not a thing but a social relation. It is porous and can crack. Holloway has given the word 'revolution' a new meaning: interstitial, and rephrased class struggle as a struggle in, against and beyond the reified forms through which both capital and *us* exist.

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[1] At their London Conference in 1976, CSE members launched the journal *Capital & Class* (C&C) (which evolved from the CSE Bulletin). Both C&C and the Edinburgh Journal of the CSE, *Common Sense: A journal of a wholly new type*, created by Richard Gunn and Werner Bonefeld in 1987 in Scotland, would become outlets for Holloway's publications (on the CSE, see Picciotto 1980; Radice 1980).

[2] For a critique of the GD and Hirsch's reformulation of the state theory and the Fordist state, see Bonefeld and Holloway 1991.

[3] For an account of CSE state debate see Clarke 1991a.

[4] They reached the conclusion that 'we have to look behind the institutional separation between economy, law and policy, to see the money, law and the state as economic, legal forms and complementary policies the power of capital' (Clarke 1988: 15).

[5] Picciotto highlights that the implication of this is that the real question is what are the *forms adopted by* social relations, what is the relationship between the institutional forms - through which economic activity takes place, and political forms, the public sphere - through which political activity takes place, and how they are synthesized in the reproduction of society as a whole' (Dinerstein and Picciotto1998, author's interview).

[6] The authors of *In and Against the State* (1979/1980) were Cynthia Cockburn, John Holloway, Donald Mackenzie John McDonald, Jeanette Mitchell, Neil McInnes, Nicola Murray and Kathy Polanshek.

[7] In a pivotal article, Bonefeld assesses both the autonomist and structuralist approaches to class struggle. Both fail to grasp the inner connection between capital and labour: 'the inversion of the class perspective is dependent upon two "subjects"' (Bonefeld, 1994: 44). The *inner connection* between capital and labour must be re-established: 'the problem of autonomism and/or structuralism arises from a conceptualisation that sees labour as existing either merely *against* capital (autonomism) or merely *in* capital (structuralism). Structuralist and autonomist approaches are complementary because both depend on the notion of "capital" as a logical entity. While structuralist approaches emphasize capital as an autonomous subject, autonomist approaches emphasise capital as a machine-like thing. Both approaches depend on a determinist view of capital in as much as capital is perceived fetishistically as an extra-human thing. The notion of labour as existing in and against capital … stresses the internal relation between substance and social form' (49/50).

[8] Coined by Richard Gunn (1987) the term explains the 'possibility of A existing as not A, i.e., as existing in *the mode of being denied'.* To Gunn (1994: 54) Marx's early concept of 'alienation' means that to be alienated is 'to exist as *an other* than oneself'

[9] The 'Battle of Seattle' successfully prevented the launching of the Millennial negotiations from taking place after enduring crude police repression. The protests were repeated in several of the locations where WTO members met and led to the creation of the World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre and argentine rebellion of 19-20 December.

[10] Holloway was referring to a poem from Bass Culture by Linton Kwesi Johnson, published in *Dread Beat and Blood*, Bogie-L'Ouverture Publications, London, 1975

[11] An example of this is Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000) where the authors argue for a transition from Imperialism to Empire, thus falling into the 'paradigmatic tradition' that seeks identification and regularity (Holloway 2005d) and leads to the positivisation of theory and the subject or radical change. As Holloway sees it, their idea of 'Saint

Francis of Assisi as the example of communist militancy is the repugnant culmination of positive thought' (Holloway, 2005c).

[12] See debate with Simon Clarke in Dinerstein and Neary (2002).

[13] To Gunn 'something quite like class in its sociological meaning does indeed exist in capitalist society, but only as "appearance" or, in other words, as an aspect of the fetishism to which Marxism stands opposed. Like vulgar political economy, sociological Marxism takes appearances at their face value and casts itself upon the mercy of the existing order of things' (Gunn 1987: 20). To Gunn 'we can say that class is the relation itself (for example, the capital-labour relation) and, more specifically, a relation of struggle. The terms "class" and "class- relation" are interchangeable, and al1 class is a class-relation of some historically particular kind' (16).

[14] In February 1999, Holloway presented a paper titled 'Class and Classification' at the International Conference 'The Labour Debate: The Theory and Reality of Labour in a World of Increasing Unemployment and Poverty' convened by Ana C. Dinerstein and Mike Neary at the University of Warwick, Centre for Labour Studies. Holloway's contribution focuses on what he saw as the failure of the concept of the working class and the labour movement for an understanding of activism and subjectivity today. He approached the problem of the subject of labour not by affirming the working class, but by arguing for its abolition. Key to his account is Marx's theory of commodity fetishism, which Holloway transformed into an ongoing process of *fetishisation*. To him, commodity fetishism was an open process by which the subject is separated from the object of its productive capacity, and human activity is classified as labour or the working class. His major opponent in the debate over fetishism was his CSE fellow and friend Simon Clarke (see Dinerstein and Neary (2002).

[15] For a critique of the concept of 'doing' see Stoezler (2005). He argues that Holloway conflates three forms of resistance in the concept of doing, i.e. human doing, scream and effective resistance, which important theoretical and political implications

[16] Holloway used this term for the first time in the title of an article where he discussed the importance of Marxism as a theory of struggle and the inner connection between capital and labour (Holloway 1991).

[17] On this see also Hardt and Holloway (2012)